Kintsugi

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Kintsugi

by harleygirl2648

Summary

“I don’t wish to see you in pain.”

“That's never stopped you before,” Will said, and Hannibal felt another part of him shatter because he of course he was right. But before he could leave the room and let Will be, he was stopped with a soft, “How long have you been in love with me?”

Kintsugi: a Japanese method for repairing broken ceramics with a special lacquer mixed with gold, silver, or platinum.

Or, how to bring the teacup back together.

Notes

This took for-fucking-ever to finish, because everything Hannibal-related needs layers upon layers of metaphor and double meaning. Also, Hannibal can never talk like a normal person, so writing his dialogue is hell.

Anyways, I hope you enjoy!

Becoming

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

A full two months after the fall off the cliff, Hannibal and Will had fully recovered now, at least in the physical sense. But mentally, the pieces were still in disarray between them. The teacup was shattered, but the shards had stuck in the air after they had broken. It was unclear whether it would come together or fall apart for good.

Hannibal heard Will before he could open his eyes. He felt very much like all those teacups he had broken, scattered, messy. His last memory had been embracing Will and then the icy clutches of the water as they fell from the cliff, and he had welcomed death if this is what it felt like.

*Death couldn't hurt **this** much, though. He felt like he had just crawled through one of Dante's circles of Hell. It was a subject he had never given much thought to, which circle he would be condemned to if Dante had been right about Hell. He had always decided that it didn't really matter then, all that mattered was the now.*

But he could hear Will whispering, sounding ragged and torn. Not quite pleading, more on the edge of demanding.

"Hannibal. You have to wake up. Wake. Up. Please."

And against all better judgement, all sense of medical expertise, the idea that he would take an order from anyone, and the indignity he should feel at Will for trying to kill them both and was now asking him to live, Hannibal opened his eyes.

Will was awake as well, just far enough away that he couldn't reach out and touch him. God, he wanted to touch him, but suddenly it felt there was a new barrier up between them that he had no desire to cross. He looked as awful as Hannibal felt. Dolarhyde's knife wound was as raw and open as the bullet wound on Hannibal, and they were both taking shallow, deep breaths, unable to take their eyes off of each other.

The handle of the teacup froze in midair.

Will's first crystal-clear memory after the cliff fall (he only vaguely remembered asking Hannibal to wake up) was of Chiyoh tending to the wound on his face. He had no idea how she got there, how she even knew, but it didn't surprise him. She was wringing a washcloth in a bowl of water before aggressively rubbing it against his face. The warmth of the cloth was only a brief respite before the intense stinging sensation set in. He hissed, she shushed him harshly. "Quiet now, he is finally asleep. He refused to sleep until he saw that you were attended to."

"What - what -"

“Saltwater compress, to stop the bacteria,” she stated, soaking the rag again and pressing more salt against the broken skin. “I would use sugar, but I have none.”

“Hurts.”

“Good. It is good that you feel the pain. It means that the nerves are not dead, you can still feel. Otherwise you would be numb, numbness is the enemy. Makes you senseless, putting you closer towards the grave when you cannot feel. Now you are only feeling shock, nervousness at the unknown future before you. I have news for you, Will Graham.”

“Good or bad?”

“Depends. You will live. Hannibal will live. Whether you view that as a positive or a negative is up to you,” she said, finally removing the cloth and Will could feel her stitching the wound back together. This time he didn’t hiss at the pain, he closed his eyes and let it happen. The pain was a reminder that this was real, that he was alive, that Hannibal was alive.

Chiyoh was right. He didn’t know if he wanted that or not.

He just knew that he wasn’t numb to Hannibal, and that would have made it easier to decide.

Hannibal made no move to touch Will at all during their recovery, and Will did the same. They cooked around each other, cleaned, licked their own wounds, but they stayed apart. Dancing around each other in circles, like they had for so many years. Will would curl up by the window seat and stay there all day, staring out into the woods. Hannibal preferred to sit and listen to records, drawing from memory their lives up until this point.

They didn’t even talk very much. All that remained between them was catching glimpses of each other in passing, in ways they thought the other wouldn't notice. A look across the table, crossing each other in the halls.

Will got out of the shower, a towel around his waist and heading back to his room when he nearly ran into Hannibal, who really didn’t have an excuse to be in the hallway other than the chance to be close to Will.

“Sorry,” Will muttered with a wave of his free hand before heading into his room. “Got lost in my head again.”

Please let me lose myself there as well, Hannibal though, trying to ignore how much he wanted to open the door after him and beg him to *please* touch him. It was driving him to question his already uncertain sanity.

Will came downstairs later it Hannibal starting to make something for dinner. Chiyoh had left several doves she had shot in the kitchen, as they had finally recovered enough to be left alone. This, of course, meant that their future together was up the air. Hannibal was convinced that Will would leave. He had no reason to stay, and yet, he had no reason to leave. But they had made no attempt to be close to one another.

Will's fever spiked dangerously in the night not long after the fall, and Hannibal was changing his cold cloth when Will muttered, "Why are you doing this?"

"I don't wish to see you in pain."

"That's never stopped you before," Will said, and Hannibal felt another part of him shatter because he of course he was right. But before he could leave the room and let Will be, he was stopped with a soft, "How long have you been in love with me?"

It made Hannibal pause in the doorway, and turn back around only to see Will's eyes closed, already back asleep, it would seem.

"I don't know," he admitted, more to himself than Will. "Perhaps the first moment I saw you, perhaps after our first session, perhaps after you killed Garret Jacob Hobbs and we tried to keep Abigail alive. I do not know. All I know is that I have never stopped loving you since I realized it."

He turns to leave again and Will thinks to himself, as he was not asleep, "Thank you."

Hannibal gets into his own bed. But his dreams are painful reminders of what could have happened, after he served the lamb and took Will with him that night, if they had simply left Italy after their meeting at the Primavera, after they escaped Muskrat Farm and Will hadn't told him to leave.

They all end with a smile on Will's face, and that is when Hannibal knows he is dreaming, because he's never seen that level of pure joy on his face before, and he knows he would not be the cause of it.

"Deboned dove, salt and pepper seasoned, with wild blackberry juice drizzle," Hannibal presents. It's a much simpler meal than one he would normally prepare. Will nods, and eats one entire dove whole. Hannibal has to brace himself in order to not let out a groan at the sight of Will's throat bobbing as he swallows the little bird. Not quite an ortolan, but it's giving him that same feeling he had back when he thought he and Will would leave together all those years ago. Will licks his lips, subtly, but Hannibal adjusts himself in his chair nonetheless.

"It's delicious," Will says, picking up another dove. Hannibal does the same, and they consume the little birds together, the blackberry juice dripping down from the corner of their mouths and Hannibal can't make himself care until after all of the little doves are gone. He wipes his mouth and takes a sip of water.

"Chiyoh will be here in the morning with my new passport and identification," he states plainly, knowing that this may be the last conversation they have. "Shall I tell you where I am going?"

“No,” Will shakes his head. “I don’t want to know.”

Hannibal's heart sinks, but he nods. “We can drop you off somewhere close to the nearest town.”

“Thank you,” Will says as he nods, and Hannibal cannot get a reading on his face. “For everything.” And then he stands up and leaves to go up to his bedroom. Hannibal decides for the first time in his life to leave the dirty dishes in the kitchen and go straight to bed.

“I know you’re not asleep.”

Hannibal hears Will say that in the doorway, and can tell he is leaning against the door, almost in a *contrapposto* style, from the way the light from the hallway shifts in the door. But Hannibal does not move from where he lies in the bed, covered so he cannot see Will without moving. He doesn't want to move.

“I know you’re not asleep," Will repeats. "You’re a light sleeper like me. But I need to pretend that you are asleep while I talk. I don’t know if I can talk to you directly about this without dealing with extended metaphors, it's far too late for that, and I have to tell you something. So I'm going to pretend that you can't hear me so I can clear the air.”

Hannibal expects Will to tell him that he is leaving in the morning, and that he never wants to see him again. Which is why his heart suddenly leaps into his throat and chokes him when Will takes a deep breath and says almost gently, “I didn’t realize that what we felt for each other was love.”

Will lets out that nervous laugh that Hannibal has always adored. “Amazing, isn’t it? All this empathy and I didn’t even realize that I loved you.”

God, he said the words Hannibal has dreamed about for years and it’s all Hannibal can do to not throw the covers off and throw Will against the wall and kiss the words out of his mouth, but he is supposed to be asleep. Wil continues talking, and Hannibal clings to every word.

“I didn’t know that they way we felt for each other was love," he repeats, as though he can't believe it himself. "Gothic romantic love, you know? The kind where the world crumbles at the lovers' feet as they embrace. That sounds...*terrifying,* honestly. Overwhelming. *You’ve* always been overwhelming, ever since our first meetings. Remember when you saved that man’s life in an ambulance, took your jacket off, stared into my eyes as you worked? I thought about that too much. I still think about it sometimes, because that’s when I think I realized that something stronger than friendship existed between us. Hanging in the balance between life and death, that’s where we exist."

Will takes another deep breath before continuing with a sentence that almost breaks Hannibal's heart further, “I wanted to go with you that night. I did. You know, it wasn’t the blade that hurt the most that night. Even when you slit Abigail’s throat, it killed me, but what hurt the most initially was the *coldness* in your eyes, the way you pulled the knife back out of

me and let me fall to the floor. I would have preferred it if you left the knife in my gut when you left, then I would have had something tangible besides the scar alone to remember you.

“And you should know that even when I told you to go, after Muskrat Farm, that I didn't want to know where you were going, that I still loved you. I lied when I said I didn’t want to think about you anymore, I knew I’d never be able to stop. And then three years passed, and I saw you again and it felt like no time at all had passed. You were just there, patiently waiting to see me like I was your patient again. I knew when you - when we escaped to the cliff, that there was no way it could end well. I didn’t care. *You* didn’t care. I keep dreaming about that cliffside, you know. I’ve never had anyone look at me the way you do, but the way you did then - then I knew there was no way I could let either of us go without the other, or maybe I was just high on adrenaline and bloodlust and pain. God, you were staring at me in complete adoration, like I was some work of art.”

You are, Hannibal thought, feeling all sense of rationality fading, love flooding his veins. *You are art made human.*

“And therein lies the problem,” Will says. He has said more words these past few minutes than their entire recovery period. “If I leave, I have nothing left. Molly’s gone, I don’t blame her. I’m unemployed. I don’t know what I’ll do, maybe just move to Florida and fix boat motors for a living, drinking myself stupid and scowling at anyone who asks where I got this damn scar. But if I stay here with you, there’s no way our story ends with us dying peacefully in our sleep. I can’t see us ever living in relative peace. The old nihilist question: if nothing matters, why bother with anything at all? I just - I don’t know what to do. I guess I should sleep on it. Thank you for humoring me with my ramblings,” Will says offhandedly, as though he hasn't picked up Hannibal's entire world like a snowglobe and shook it hard. “Goodnight.”

Hannibal doesn't sleep at all after Will goes back to his room, and get up as soon as the sun starts rising in the east. He heads down the kitchen and fixes a protein scramble, just like the first meal he ever brought to Will. It’s different, mainly eggs and a bit of meat Chiyoh had brought, and wild mushrooms and herbs. He puts it in the oven and heads out to the porch and stares out over the wild expanse of the forest, of the mountains and the sounds of the sea nearby.

Will has not slept at all after he told Hannibal everything, and he finally got out of bed when the sun started to rise. He smells Hannibal preparing something for breakfast and then the sliding glass to the porch opens. So he heads down the stairs and sees Hannibal out on the porch, and slides the glass open, joining him. Hannibal turns his head to look at him, nods once as if to reassure himself that he’s there, and turns back. He doesn't make an effort to plead with Will, Hannibal doesn't beg, even if Will can feel the desperation radiating off of him. He *loves* him, and yet he's going to let Will leave if that's what he wants.

Will decides right then and there that he couldn't leave Hannibal if he wanted to.

The way Hannibal looks at him, loves him, god, Hannibal Lecter should be incapable of love, but he *isn't.* He *loves* him. And - and Will loves him just as much.

There's the answer to the nihilist question: if the universe doesn't care what you do, then do whatever you want, because it really doesn't matter in the end.

Will walks over, standing right next to Hannibal and mimics him, gripping the railing with one hand. And then, very decidedly, he reaches over and takes Hannibal's free hand, lightly intertwining their fingers. Will resists the urge to squeeze when he hears Hannibal audibly gasp, and turns fully to look at him. Hannibal looks like he's about to break, like suddenly he's the fragile little teacup and Will is his paddle.

Will squeezes his hand gently, in time with his own heartbeat, and says with a small smile, "It's - it's still beautiful."

Hannibal shatters.

All of his words evaporate in his mouth except for one. *"Will…"*

"I can't leave, Hannibal, I have to stay with you. Where else would I go?"

Hannibal has completely shut down, and Will is suddenly aware of how *much* power he now exudes over him. He could send him out of his mind with one touch, one word. Hannibal bites his lip, as though he's trying to hold himself together. Their roles are reversed, it's Will's who's the anchor right now. Hannibal reaches out hesitantly with other hand, and brushes Wil's hair out of his face, gently cupping the side of his face with the scar. It's reminiscent of that night, that night when the teacup almost came back together.

The pieces gather together again, with gold filling the cracks where the porcelain broke before.

Slowly, carefully, not wanting to disturb the golden glue as it dries, they move closer together and share a soft kiss.

Will is suddenly aware that he's shaking, and so is Hannibal, and yet he can't bring himself to hold Hannibal tighter for fear he'll slip like water through his fingers. When they finally break the kiss, they don't move, just breathing against the other's lips, savoring this one moment of peace between them.

"Will-" Hannibal starts to whisper, then stops. He opens his mouth to try and say something, but then closes his mouth again. "I - I -"

"Are you - are you okay?" Will whispers. Hannibal stares into his eyes, and tries to think of the right thing to say.

"I - I feel at a loss for words, for the first time in my life," he finally says, so softly Will wouldn't believe that the man in front of him is Hannibal Lecter. "There are - there are no words to describe how I feel for you, Will."

“Then you don't need to say anything,” Will reassures, leaning in and kissing him again. And if Will wasn’t already set on staying here, the sound Hannibal makes as they kiss again is enough to cement his decision.

They stay like that for a long time. Occasionally sharing a kiss, but just sharing in each other's company, just *touching* each other.

Violence is what you understand, Chiyoh had once told Will. And that was true for both of them but neither expected to fall apart when their fingers interlaced.

Neither of them say “I love you.” It didn’t need to be said. It was felt. Love didn’t feel like enough of a word right now.

Hannibal gently runs his thumb over Will’s. He’s suddenly struck with another realization: Will’s wedding ring is not on his finger. “Where-”

Will shakes his head. “Threw it away. Molly deserves a clean break. That life is over, Hannibal. We’re dead, according to the world. And I know there is no way for what - *whatever* this is that we have to end well for ourselves or for anyone around us. But I know that I need you. *I need you,* Hannibal.”

Finally, Hannibal stops being so damn hesitant, and moves from where he was gripping the railing and wraps his free arm around Will’s waist and pulls him even closer, squeezing his hipbone hard before he kisses him again. Rougher this time, more passion, and their hands finally grip each other's tighter, not willing to let go. Not now, not ever.

This time when they break away, they realize that they hadn’t been breathing the entire time, and they both take deep breaths, nearly gasping like when they came out of the sea. Hannibal’s eyes are glittering with tears and Will feels like his are burning.

“Are you now going to ask where I - where *we* are going?” Hannibal asks now, a voice barely above a whisper. Will smiles like he’s only ever done in his dreams.

“As long as it’s with you, I don’t care,” he says. Hannibal laughs then, and it feels like weights have been lifted off of their chests and everything feels like it is exactly as it should be for the first time in their entire relationship. Hannibal removes his arm from around Will’s waist, but still holds his hand as though Will might fade away if he let go. They decide to go back inside, but Hannibal's face shifts the second the enter the kitchen again, and Will bursts out laughing at his disgusted face when he pulls a burned protein scramble out of the oven. Hannibal looks up, surprised at the noise, and Will laughs again before he sets his hand on Hannibal’s shoulder as he sets the pan on the stove.

“I - I’ve never seen you so flustered,” he manages to spit out before he's laughing again. Hannibal can’t resist leaning in and kissing him again and *oh god* Will *lets him kiss him again.* He’s not entirely unconvinced this isn’t some cruel dream and he’ll wake up and Will is gone. But no, he opens his eyes after he pulls away and Will is still there, still smiling.

They sit down at the table with the burned protein scramble and attempt to eat it. Hannibal hasn’t cooked anything this dreadful in years and it’s crispy and charred and vile but Will is

smiling as he forces himself to eat another bite and laughing and the morning light accents the scar on his cheekbone perfectly. He could spend years drawing that particular sight.

And then it suddenly dawns on him that he *can.*

He can spend the rest of his life drawing that scar, drawing every inch of Will, in every light, in every position. Suddenly his mind starts racing, flipping through pages and pages of ideas of everything they can *do* together, everything they can *be.* He has to stop himself when he thinks about what Will would look like lost in the throes of passion.

Chiyoh enters the house. She doesn't knock, nobody expects her to. She surveys the scene before her, watching silently as Hannibal and Will toss the food in the garbage and finally approaches the counter as Will scrubs it down. She slides a passport and identification over to him, alone with a plane ticket. He looks up in surprise, he hadn't even told her his choice.

"There's a small airport not far from here, I will take both of you there. The FBI officially declared you both dead two weeks ago, but remain low under the radar, Jack Crawford may have some of his people out scanning the area still. Hannibal, you have the safehouse key in your envelope, it's all prepared. Come, takeoff is in three hours."

Will and Hannibal follow Chiyoh outside without any hesitation, and Will is shocked at how easy this decision feels. His heart should be racing, he should run away before they make it to the car, but he climbs in the backseat and lets himself rest the entire ride to the airport. It is a silent drive, instrumental playing from the car radio. It is peaceful, like turning a page to open to a new chapter.

When they arrive, Hannibal nods his goodbye and goes to remove the suitcases she has packed in the trunk, and Will looks at Chiyoh awkwardly, rubbing the back of his neck with his hand.

"Uh, thank you. The scar, it's, uh, been healing well. But, um, how did you know that I was going with him?"

She gives him an incredulous look, as though it was the most idiotic question possible. "You could not kill him, so you became him."

Will nods, and so does Chiyoh. "Good luck," she says crisply to both Will and Hannibal, who hands Will a suitcase, his new fake name on the tag. She turns away afterwards and gets back into the car and drives off.

"Shall we?" Hannibal asks, gesturing towards the entrance to the airport. Will smiles then, nodding again.

"Let's go."

Three hours later, they are on the plane. First class, because Will expected nothing less. They are on the run, for the rest of their lives, and they're still in first class. Hannibal wasn't very

impressed with the wine selection, but orders a white moscato for them both. It's sweet, light, and Hannibal reaches out with his free left hand and takes Will's. Will squeezes his hand back, smiling into his little glass.

"Han-" he starts, before remembering that he was supposed to use the fake name. He bites his lip and then laughs as he sets his glass down on the tray before him. *"Shit,* what's your name again?"

Hannibal chuckled a little then, and Will feels relaxed for the first time - well, for the first time, period. On the run, with fake identities that he can't even remember, and he's relaxed. Hannibal reaches into his carry-on and pulls out his new passport. "Julius Kore."

"I can remember that," Will supposes, and then pulls out his own passport, "And I'm-"

He stops, then. Mentally he curses Chiyoh, she had done this on purpose, he was sure of it. "I'm Patrick Kore."

Hannibal visibly adjusts himself, and Will rolls his eyes and shakes his head. "Damn, if I hadn't spent these past two months in a drugged-up haze with you, I'd think this was *your* idea."

"I would be lying to you if I said that I had not given the thought consideration."

"Let me guess," Will teases with a smile, "Since Freddie Lounds dubbed us 'Murder Husbands' in Tattle Crime?"

"Perhaps before that, but her terminology helped put a name to those fantasies."

"Jesus Christ, I've signed up to hear sentences like that for the rest of my life. Good thing I love you," he smiles, which grows wider as Hannibal grips his hand a little tighter. "How long will it take for you to get used to me saying those words?"

"Never."

"Sap," Will smirks. "I expect to be wined and dined before you stick a ring on my finger."

"What do you think I've spent all of these years doing?"

Will laughs again, and rolls his eyes. "Yeah, I walked right into that one, didn't I? Can we adjust to this new life together a little bit before we *actually* get married?"

Hannibal bites his lip, just subtly enough that Will notice, and he grips his hand tighter. He looked over at Will, love shining in his eyes.

"Would you like that, Will?"

"I'm *here,* aren't I?" he smiles, leaning across the armrest for a gentle kiss. Hannibal nearly melts, and Will realizes again how much sway he has over this man. "Might as well make it official," he jokes as he pulls away. Hannibal stares at him in wonder, the same look Will remembers when they met again in front of the *Primavera.*

“I will spend the rest of my life in worship of you, Will.”

Will feels himself blush then, like he’s a teenager with a crush and Hannibal is so deeply in love he almost doesn't believe it as he leans in for another kiss.

“I love you,” he whispers against Will’s lips, as though he’s sharing a deep secret.

“I love you, too,” Will whispers back, and if the plane had fallen out of the sky and they were plunged into the depths of the ocean once again, he would accept his death with grace, as there could be no greater feeling in life than hearing Will say those words.

When they land, a taxi takes them to their house. It's a beautiful, large house, not far from the beach, complete with a car and a pool.

“Jesus,” Will breathed out as they made their way in, and he just stood in the hallway. “It’s huge.”

“Would you believe it’s a downsize from the one in Argentina?” Hannibal remarks as he inspects the kitchen. Will laughs as he leans against the staircase, gazing up at the chandelier.

“Yeah, I could believe that. When you get me a ring, promise me it won’t be as gaudy as that chandelier,” Will joked, smirking as he heard Hannibal close the cabinet with a little more force than necessary. “I’m going to take the bags upstairs, okay?”

“Thank you. I’ll prepare a quick dinner,” Hannibal replies, starting a pan of water to boil and opening the fridge. Already, this is feeling domestic, and both of them are surprised at how well they fit together like this. Will takes both suitcases and surveys the upstairs. There are two bedrooms, and he selects the larger of the two to set down the suitcases. He opens the curtains and lets the light of the late afternoon sun in, heightening the dark blue cover across the king-sized bed.

He stares out the window, out over the pool in the lush, fenced-in backyard, listening to the ocean as he opens up the window. He’s relaxed, now. He feels safe here, in this house with Hannibal Lecter. It’s such an oxymoron that it borders on ridiculous. Though he expects to feel this way a lot more often, with their current situation.

And now he finds that he doesn't want it any other way.

He hears something sizzling downstairs, and heads back down to see Hannibal stirring pasta in a pot. He looks up at Will and smiles.

“Are you hungry?”

“All I’ve had is airplane food, of course I am,” Will grins, leaning against the fridge and watching as Hannibal plates out the pasta and drains the vegetables. “Aren’t you starving, you didn’t eat anything on the flight.”

“I would rather starve than eat a meal in an airplane.”

“We were in first class, Hannibal.”

Hannibal quirks an eyebrow, pouring the vegetables over the pasta and picking up the plates to set the table. “Reheated, meals irregardless. I thought I’d make something simple for our first meal here. Pasta primavera.”

“No meat,” Will remarks as he sits opposite Hannibal, looking at the delicious meal before him.

“Yes,” Hannibal nods. “Partly because I have no meat, and to symbolize a new chapter.”

“You don’t want to hunt anymore?”

Hannibal pauses, inhaling the aroma of the red wine in the bottle before pouring them both a glass. “No, it isn’t that, Will. It’s to symbolize that if you asked me to stop, I - I may be able to stop my habits if you wished for me to stop. I would rather have you by my side for the rest of our days than make you work against your nature.”

Will takes a sip of wine, keeping Hannibal's gaze and knowing he’s watching as his throat bobs as he swallows. When he speaks again, his voice is as smooth and rich as honey, and Hannibal feels weak at the knees. “You haven't spent all of these years teaching me *my* true nature for you to give up *yours.”*

Hannibal takes his seat, drinking his wine. “Perhaps not. You are not against me continuing my habits?”

“Only if I am allowed to join you,” Will smirks around his fork before taking a bite of the pasta and reveling in the darkness glowing in Hannibal’s eyes. It makes heat pool low in his stomach.

“You wish to to hunt?”

“I mean, I don’t know if I could kill someone who committed the *horrific* crime of scuffing my new loafers, so I think I’ll need to work up to that,” Will says with a grin. “But if I believe they deserve it? Yes. I *want* to kill with you again.”

Hannibal nods, eating another bite of the food to buy time. But he finds that even after chewing the bite thoroughly, he has no response ready.

“Speechless, doctor?” Will teases. Hannibal can’t fight the smile pulling at his lips, and he nods again.

“You have always been the only thing that has been able to render me speechless, Will,” he says. “And I would suppose that will continue the rest of our lives.”

“Good,” Will smirks, his lips wrapping around his fork in such a way that Hannibal crosses and uncrosses his legs and has to breathe out evenly in order to try to maintain his carefully balanced control. Though he realizes that soon enough, he will lose all sense of control to Will, and he finds that he doesn't even mind.

Dinner is tense, not in an unpleasant way, just ripe with the anticipation of their lives now, of all that they can do together now. They clean the dishes later, not speaking, words are hardly necessary between them as they wash and dry in sync. Afterwards, they head up the stairs and Hannibal pauses in the main bedroom doorframe, and turns to see Will standing behind him, an eyebrow raised expectantly.

“Aren’t you going to go in? Jet lag not setting in?”

“You are...*joining* me?”

“Of course,” Will says, pushing past him to sit down on the bed and look up at him through his long eyelashes. He looks absolutely *devious,* and Hannibal decides at that exact moment that Will can have *anything* he wants. Absolutely anything, as long as he allows Hannibal to draw him *just like this,* long legs stretched out, neck tilted back, dark blue eyes that seem to match the bedspread. He’s about to ask if he can find a sketchbook and draw him when Will beckons him forward with a finger. He could be teasing him just to tease or even calling him like a dog, but Hannibal doesn’t care. He takes a few steps forward, pulled by some invisible magnet.

“What are you doing, Will?”

“Selling the ‘husband’ bit,” Will smirks. “Now come here.”

Honestly, Will isn’t quite sure what inspires his boldness, but it must have something do with the heat in Hannibal’s expression and the rush in his veins the power gives him. And hell, it pays off because one minute, Hannibal is frozen in the doorframe, and the next he is in front of him, pushing him back onto the bed and kissing the air right out of his lungs.

“You will be my undoing,” Hannibal mutters as he trails kisses down Will’s cheek scar. Will laughs, a little breathlessly as he reaches up with his other hand to pull at Hannibal’s hair, encouraging to kiss him a little rougher.

“I thought I was becoming.”

“You are, Will. In *every* way.”

Will falls asleep in that bed that night, in Hannibal’s arms. Both are fully clothed, with wrinkles that will take forever to get out of the fabrics, hair mussed all the way to hell.

And neither is plagued by a single nightmare as the teacup with golden glue finds a new home on top of the shelf in their shared memory palace.

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter: hiding in plain sight and rather unconventional wedding vows.

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Consummation

Chapter Summary

How do two Murder Husbands consummate a relationship?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Perfect, Will. Gorgeous.”

“Fucking Christ, Hannibal-”

“Just like that, you’re doing so well.”

“Is it really necessary for my leg to be-”

“Yes, yes, just like that.”

Will huffed out a laugh as he collapses back on the bed, giving Hannibal a look, who pays him no mind as he continues sketching from the chair beside him. “Hannibal, is it really necessary to draw me like this?”

“Yes.” That answer was short enough that Will had to laugh again, moving in the sheets and arching back with a smirk.

“You know, you could come over here, observe the art up close, maybe even touch it.”

“Tempting,” Hannibal smiles, picking up another piece of charcoal for shading. “But the light accents your skin perfectly.”

“You said that Tuesday when it was storming.”

“Would you stop squirming, Will?”

Will rolls his eyes, but settles back against the sheets and lets himself be sketched. It’s honestly not as bad as he whines, he just likes pushing Hannibal’s buttons. So instead, his mind wanders to their current life. It’s been a month since they moved here, and already Hannibal’s accepted a position at the local university, so he’s been kept busy. They’ve even been invited a charity dinner tonight, which Will found endlessly hilarious.

“If there’s an *opposite* of charitable, it’s us,” he had said. But Hannibal had convinced him that they had to blend in somehow. Better to be known for being upstanding members of the community than to be recluses, less suspicion would be diverted their way. Will couldn’t

argue with that. But if it was left up to him, they'd be staying home together, sharing in each other's company, enjoying some dinner and a record softly playing in the background.

Will's mind wanders as he keeps himself still, and he thinks about the other week down in the antique stores, looking for a chair to match the dining room set. He'd wandered away from Hannibal's side to look over in the expensive jewelry cases, when he saw it.

A ring.

It was ebony, but gold was scattered across it like lightning strikes against a heavy storm. It was perfect, and before Will knew what he doing, he had bought it and slipped it into his pocket. It had remained there for the past three weeks, waiting for the right time. Knowing Hannibal, he'd want just the right moment to propose, some dinner, maybe some candles. He didn't know what would be the right time, but that was another matter. A more, well, *pressing* issue was the fact that they hadn't, well, *consummated* their relationship. Either by murder or sex, Will wasn't particularly picky.

"Hannibal?"

The man in question looked up from his shading. "Yes, Will?"

"Does it...bother you that we haven't consummated...*this* yet?"

Hannibal seemed slightly taken aback, unreadable to most. Most, not Will, though. "Does that bother you, Will?"

"If this is a therapy session, I'd prefer to not have it half-dressed while being covered in a bedsheet," Will quips, sitting up in the bed and stretching his neck out, enjoying the look he received. "But to answer the question, I guess I was expecting us to either kill someone or have sex by now."

"Do you find the two mutually exclusive?"

Will shrugs. "I don't know yet, I haven't tried mixing the two. What about you?"

"I don't receive a sexual satisfaction from killing, if that is what you are implying. I have never felt that sort of pleasure in the act."

"What sort of pleasure do you feel, doctor?"

"Satisfaction in a job done well," Hannibal answers simply, getting up from his chair to put the sketchbook away, and opening their walk-in closet, effectively changing the subject. "The charity event is in two hours, we should dress."

Will shakes his head as Hannibal comes out with an impeccably pressed suit, charcoal gray with a crisp white shirt. "Just can't help yourself, can you?"

"Oh, no, Will, this suit is for *you,"* Hannibal smiles, and Will rolls his eyes.

"Hannibal-"

“It’s perfect for you, now dress,” he orders, just a slight tinge of tease on the edge of his words. Will drags himself out of the bed, then, and sets about dressing himself.

But it’s as he buttons up the shirt in the mirror when he suddenly realizes that he's never blended in with the crowd even when his life was relatively normal, how the *fuck* is he supposed to act now that he’s a wanted man, presumed dead?

“You’re nervous,” Hannibal states, coming up behind Will in the mirror, a tie in hand. “Nervous that it will be hard to act not as yourself, having finally embraced who you are.”

“Yeah,” Will swallows, “Something along those lines.”

Hannibal nuzzles against his neck, inhaling the new aftershave he had taken to wearing. “Will, you possess the greatest empathy gift I have ever seen in my life. You were able to assume the shoes of any killer that came across your path. You can see *me,* even after all my attempts to initially throw you off the scent.” Will laughs a little at that, and Hannibal smiles against his skin. “Patrick Kore, whoever he is in your mind, should be a piece of cake for you to become.”

Will thinks for moment, then a slow grin breaks across his face. “You know you, might be right about that. By the way, it’s a hot night, isn’t it?” Then he very deliberately undoes his top two buttons, pulling away from Hannibal to smirk at him. “Hot enough that Patrick Kore’s not going to wear a tie.”

Hannibal narrows his eyes in an attempt to not appear intrigued and slightly aroused. It didn’t work. “You will be the death of me, Will.”

“I would hope that you would allow me that honor, *dear,”* Will teases as he reaches into his desk drawer to read over his fake identification. After scanning it, he looks up and glares at Hannibal, causing the other man to smile.

“Patrick Kore is a goddamn *therapist?!”*

It had always been a learning curve for Hannibal to never underestimate Will. He has always known that once Will accepted his true self that he would be a force to reckon with.

He had *not,* however, expected that he would adapt to the fake persona so *easily.*

To begin with, when they first arrived, Hannibal introduced him to Professor Medina, a colleague and would be a good test to pass.

“Cassandra,” he calls out, beckoning her over. She smiled pleasantly as she shook his hand.

“Professor Kore, so glad you made it to the event, it truly means a lot. Is *this* the-”

“Yes, my husband, Patrick. Patrick, this is Cassandra Medina, does excellent work in the criminal justice department.”

Will nods, a pleasant smile on his face. “How fascinating,” he drawls, and Hannibal can hear a long-repressed Louisiana accent tapering off the ends of his words. He sounds *delicious,* far too innocent, too beautiful. “I’ve always been interested in the criminal mind.”

“It is an amazing subject of study,” she gushes. “You would never guess how many murderers you walk past in a lifetime.”

Will laughs then, so at ease, he needn’t have worried. Hannibal’s in love all over again. “Oh, I shudder to think. There are some truly sick people in this world, you know. I’m just a run-of-the-mill therapist, I just deal with unwanted Oedipal complexes and depression cases.”

Cassandra giggles at that, charmed, and Hannibal knows they've passed a test: blending in. He tells Will how impressed he is after she walks away, and Will rolls his eyes with a smile.

“Everything I do is impressive to you. I’m getting a drink.”

Watching Will interact with the crowd was a fantastic sight. He weaved in and out of the different groups with a glass of whiskey in hand, effectively selling his identity to everyone. He was proud of Will’s accomplishment when he noticed one of the waiters looking over at Will.

Several times. Long, intense looks that was making him see red. How dare he-

Oh.

Will was *smiling* at him as he accepted another cocktail from the tray he was carrying around, and he caught him *winking* at the man. So Hannibal walked over and put his arm around Will’s shoulder.

“Feeling possessive, dear?”

“Why do you insist on calling me that?”

“Would you prefer *darling?”* Will asks with a grin, wincing as he sipped the cocktail. “Ugh, that is a terrible whiskey sour.”

“Let’s go home, I’ll make you a better one.”

“Not now, darling,” Will sighs, removing himself from Hannibal’s grasp. And then he said with another wink, “I’ll be home later, you go ahead. Make yourself scarce.”

Hannibal watches as Will slipped away back into the crowd, mingling and gradually making his way back over to that waiter and striking up conversation. That man was leaning in closer to Will the more he talked, and kept looking him over in such a way that Hannibal wanted to break his neck right there in front of everyone.

He was *never* this irrational, he realized. The idea that someone else was potentially seeing Will the way he did was *infuriating.*

Hannibal makes his way back over to Will as the waiter turned to get another drink for Will. “What *are* you doing, Will?”

Will smirks at him, taking a strawberry from the nearby table and popping it into his mouth. “Fishing.”

“Fishing?”

“Mmm hmm,” Will hums, touching Hannibal’s shoulder lightly, and then straightening his collar before leaning in close. “Darling, go home. I’ll be there in an hour.”

Hannibal considers what Will is suggesting, then nods. “Very well.”

Will has exactly three minutes to be home before Hannibal descends into utter madness.

He has been waiting at the top of the front staircase ever since he came home, waiting and *waiting,* and *hating* how much he misses Will, after him only being away from an hour. He’s ready to leave and go drag Will back home when the *back* door opens.

“He’s asleep,” came Will’s voice as a different set of footsteps came in beside him.

“Asleep, and he has you, what a waste,” said the voice of the waiter from earlier, and Hannibal suddenly realizes what Will meant by *fishing.*

He had set out a lure and got a nibble, and now he was reeling him in.

“Care for another drink, Marcel?” Will asks, the sounds of bottles clinking on the granite counter in the kitchen. Hannibal hears the click of the gun before he saw Will appear by the door that led to the kitchen. He ducks back into the spare room as Will looked entirely unimpressed as he was forced up the stairs by a gun pressed to his neck.

“Up the stairs.”

“You know, I thought you were a little off, that’s what I thought was fascinating,” Will says dryly. Marcel just barks at him to continue walking. “Yes, I have been reading about the current serial killer in the news. Unfaithful couples, found murdered in their own homes, together in the end. You use yourself as bait to test the waters, that's how you choose them. Let me guess: your lover left you for someone else and you just couldn’t *take it,* could you?”

“Stop talking.”

“Well, I-”

The second Marcel puts his hand on Will's shoulder and grips the gun tighter, Hannibal slips out from where he was hiding and easily overpowers the man. His vision is tainted with red as he roughly pulls him away from Will. The only reason he doesn't strangle the man right now is because he wants to *savor* this man's death. Marcel kicks and squirms but Hannibal's grip is like steel. He can't move an inch.

"Wh-who a-are-"

"You severely underestimated the depth of our fidelity," Will smirks, letting a knife slide out of his sleeve and in one fluid motion, slices clean through Marcel's throat. The blood rushes out like a river, ruining the front of Will's charcoal gray suit, and flecks spatter across his face. Hannibal feels his fingers growing slick from the blood, and his own blood heats as he takes in Will's expression.

He's panting hard, fire glowing like embers in his eyes. *Absolutely breathtaking.* A slightly dazed grin breaks across Will's face, and he closes his eyes and sighs in bliss as his tongue flicks out to lick the blood at the corner of his mouth. He doesn't even need to tell Hannibal that it felt good, it felt right. He opens his eyes and just stares into Hannibal's, hardly able to believe that there is such blatant and open adoration in them.

It feels like the perfect time to ask the question, and he reaches into his pocket and takes out the loose ring that he purchased weeks ago. He holds it up, letting the light from the hallway glint off of the gold cracks.

"Marry me?" he asks with a slight laugh that dies on his lips as he notices Hannibal's expression change completely. It has grown deadly serious, and he drops the corpse unceremoniously onto the floor, and steps very close to Will. Feeling emboldened, Will reaches out and takes Hannibal's hand, sliding the ring onto his finger.

"If you hate it, we can trade it in for a different- wait, you didn't even say y-"

Hannibal suddenly twists his hand around and clutches Will's wrist tightly, so tightly that he could break it if he just moves it a little too sharply. And a second later, Will is being dragged down the hall to their bedroom. Hannibal slams *(slams)* the door shut, and shoves Will hard up against the door. There is nothing but darkness swirling in Hannibal's eyes and it makes heat pool low in Will's stomach, which only burns hotter as Hannibal crushes their lips together. He keeps Will pressed against the wall, and he reaches his hand up and tangles it in the dark brown curls.

"Hann-" Will tries to say, but there's a soft growl against his lips that shuts him up as Hannibal's other hand clutches Will's hip so tight it's going to bruise. But god, it feel so *fucking* incredible he never wants him to stop, and he lets out a weak groan instead.

"Yes," Hannibal breathes out, voice absolutely dripping with lust. "Will, *yes."* He keeps muttering 'yes' over and over into each kiss, in different languages, and Will could swear that he's starting to slur a little in his words, but it could just be that his head is spinning too much to be able to focus.

Finally, Hannibal breaks away just enough to press his forehead against Will's, their lips just barely touching. The blood from their victim is smeared across their suits, ruining the expensive fabric. His eyes are dark, but shining with love.

"Will, love," he says reverently, "I take you, to be my husband. I promise to be true to you, in good times and bad, in sickness and in health. I will love and honor you all the days of my life."

Will smiles, unable to help himself, and continues on with their makeshift ceremony. "And I take you, Hannibal, to be my lawfully wedded husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part."

"And by the power invested in me, by myself-" Will snorts, and Hannibal grins as he reaches into his own pocket, "I now pronounce us, husband and husband. Long may we live."

He pulls out a black ring, with a perfect blood red diamond in the center, and Will smiles wider as he lets Hannibal lift up his hand and slide the ring onto his finger.

"It's beautiful, Hannibal. Aren't you going to kiss me?" he smirks, and laughs into the smothering kiss Hannibal immediately plants on his lips.

"Will," Hannibal murmurs, his voice practically a purr, "I will do *so* much more than that to you tonight."

Will's next bout of laughter becomes a little slurred and messy as Hannibal trails bites and kisses down his neck. "Of - of course, you would wait until fucking *marriage* before we had sex. So old-fashioned, darling."

Hannibal's answer to that smart remark was to tear Will's shirt as easily as tissue paper, and promptly move them away from the wall and push him back onto the bad.

"I said you were old-fashioned, not a prude," Will grins, letting out a moan as Hannibal bites under his ear.

"Tell me what you want, Will. I'll give you anything, all you have to do is ask."

Will smiles, then, and pulls Hannibal closer to him by his tie, and kisses him with surprising gentleness, before saying softly, "You, Hannibal. I want you."

Hannibal groans, and it's the most human he's ever sounded. "Oh, Will. You have me, for the rest of our lives."

They keep kissing afterwards, and as more and more articles of clothing come off *("Fucking Christ, Hannibal, no one wears this many layers in early summer")* Will has to laugh again.

"Something amusing you, Will?"

"I always thought you'd go all out for our wedding."

“I’ll bake you a cake later. Now, I want the only words out of your mouth to be my name,” Hannibal says, pressing an open-mouthed kiss to the hollow of Will’s throat, making him moan as he threads his fingers through his new husband's silvery blonde hair.

“Hannibal, I love you.”

“I love you, too, Will.”

****One Week Later****

“Italian wedding soup,” Hannibal presents, spooning out portions for Will and Cassandra Medina. “Green vegetables, my own homemade meatballs, and freshly grated parmesan cheese.”

Will smiles up at Hannibal and Cassandra awes after having a spoonful of the soup. “Oh, you’re both so lovely. And this soup is delicious, Julius.”

“Thank you,” Hannibal nods before excusing himself from the room to go find the corkscrew. He could have sworn that he’d left it by the bar, but then he realized that he’d left it upstairs after they had consumed two bottles of champagne and three pieces of white chocolate-raspberry wedding cake.

Will turned back from where he watched Hannibal head up the stairs to have a some of the soup himself.

“And he cooks, too,” Cassandra grins around her own spoonful. “How did you ever meet a man like that?”

“Oh, merely by coincidence,” Will sighs, letting himself enjoy past memories that used to cause pain. “And you think he’s great, you haven't heard him extol the virtues of Botticelli’s *Primavera* for hours. It gets rather dry after fifteen minutes.”

“I would put up with hours of dry art lectures if my boyfriend could cook like this,” she laughed, before scooping up a meatball and chewing it slowly.

“My god, what does he put *in* these meatballs? It's so *good.* What kind of meat is this?”

“Pork,” Will smiles into his spoon. “With a fermented fish paste as the secret ingredient.”

“Fish paste, I’ll keep that in mind.”

Hannibal comes back with the corkscrew, and opens up the bottle of wine. “It adds a certain briny element to the to meat, doesn’t it? Will caught the fish himself.”

“Good catch,” Cassandra nods, giggling a little. “With both the fish and the husband, Patrick.”

“Thank you very much,” Will says, lifting his glass before taking a sip. The others do the same, and then Hannibal asks that Will accompany him into the kitchen to help plate the gouda-stuffed pork chops. As soon as they are out of site in the kitchen, Hannibal can’t help but press Will against the counter and kiss him.

“We have a guest,” Will reprimands lightly. “Darling, control yourself.”

“I’ve never been able to do that around you.”

“If I was a decent person I’d use this power for good,” Will smirks. “But I’m not.”

Hannibal smiles back, and then turns back to pouring a sauce over the pork chops when Will comes up behind him, nuzzling against his neck and wrapping his arms around his waist.

“Will.”

“Hmmm? I’m sorry, I thought you liked this.”

“As you mentioned earlier, we have a guest.”

“Oh, yeah, forgot,” Will sighs, kissing the shell of his ear and smirked again as Hannibal visibly tenses. “A shame, I’d really like it if we were continuing last night.”

At that, Hannibal turns around and give Will a hard look, but there is still a slight softness to it. “If she wasn’t here, I’d have you upstairs in our bed, begging and screaming my name.”

“Darling,” Will purrs, kissing him slowly and then pulling away far too soon. “You and I both know that *I* wasn’t the one begging last night.”

Chapter End Notes

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